

Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

OMB-01 /061 W

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R 280104Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO USIA WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 6276

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CANBERRA 5003

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION REACTION TO PRESS
CENSORSHIP IN INDIA

1. MR. GEOFF HUGHES, ABC BUREAU CHIEF IN NEW DELHI, ASKED HOME OFFICE LAST WEEK HOW HE SHOULD RESPOND TO GOI'S REQUEST THAT HE SIGN AN AGREEMENT WHICH IN EFFECT IMPOSES SELF-CENSORSHIP ON HIS REPORTING OUT OF INDIA. HE WAS ADVISED TO SIGN ON THE THEORY THAT IT IS BETTER TO HAVE AN ABC MAN ON THE SCENE EVEN IF HIS FREEDOM OF REPORTING IS HAMPERED, THAN TO HAVE HIM EXPELLED, WHICH WAS LIKELY TO HAPPEN IF HE DIDN'T SIGN.

2. ABC-TV AND RADIO CONTROLLER OF NEWS, MR. KIETH FRAZER, HAS INSTRUCTED NEWS DEPARTMENT TO SCRUTINIZE HUGHES' REPORTING AND TO "REVIEW IT DAY TO DAY". IF IT APPEARS TO BECOME DISTORTED DUE TO GOI CENSORSHIP, WHICH ABC BELIEVES IS NOT RPT NOT THE CASE AT THE MOMENT, ABC SAYS IT WILL WITHDRAW HUGHES FROM NEW DELHI "WITH RELUCTANCE".

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3. MEANWHILE, THE ABC PUBLIC AFFAIRS UNIT, WHICH IS

SEPARATE FROM THE NEW DEPARTMENT, HAS STATED THAT IT
"WILL NOT USE" MATERIAL RECEIVED FROM HUGHES BECAUSE OF
THE RESTRAINTS IMPOSED ON HIS FREEDOM OF REPORTING.

4. ABC STATES THAT ABOVE DECISIONS TAKEN ON ITS OWN
INITIATIVE AND THAT SUBJECT HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED AT
ALL WITH DEPARTMENT OF THE MEDIA OR ANY OTHER GOA
SOURCE, ALTHOUGH OF COURSE ABC IS SEMI-GOVERNMENTAL
BODY.

FINDLAY

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